

HIGGINS HERALD



ISSUE 5, VOL 3
DECEMBER 06

A Season for Change

The past few months have been full of tremendous activity, with much to celebrate as well as to mourn. USS HIGGINS has managed to accomplish an astounding amount of work while still being able to enjoy some of the holiday fun. Since leaving the yards, HIGGINS has completed a Group Sail, FEP, two ammunition on loads, and conducted a myriad of training for crewmembers. In addition to these major evolutions, HIGGINS welcomed our new Commanding Officer, Commander Jeffrey P. Menne and said goodbye to Commander Jesse Wilson. We also experienced a tremendous loss with the passing of our shipmate IT2(SW) Courtney Gordon.

This issue is dedicated to his memory. We hope you enjoy this issue of the Herald as we hail the new and remember the past.
- ENS Tiana Tafua and ENS Robert Inman



Commander Jeffrey P. Menne



USS HIGGINS at sunset during IT2 Gordon's Remembrance Ceremony

Change of Command

On November 9th, 2006 USS HIGGINS held the Change of Command ceremony on Pier 10. After a successful two years as CO of USS HIGGINS, the needs of the Navy dictated that it was time for Commander Wilson to move on to a tour in Washington D.C.. Over the course of his tenure here, he was loved and admired by one and all. It was an honor and privilege to serve under his Command and he will be sorely missed. Fairwinds and Following Seas!

As with every departure comes a new arrival, and ours has come in the form of Commander Jeffrey P. Menne. Commander Menne comes to HIGGINS from a distinguished career at sea. Having served only one shore tour since commissioning, Commander Menne lives to go to sea. With a firm commitment to professionalism, safety and having fun, Commander Menne's transition has been a smooth one.



Changing of Command



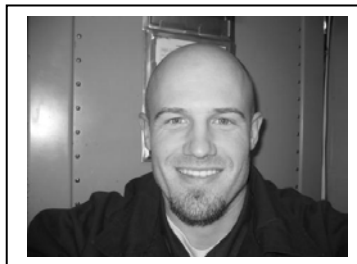
Admiral Blake, Commander Menne, Commander Wilson, and Captain Smith



Commander Menne with his family

Dedicated to the memory of IT2(SW) Courtney Gordon

USS HIGGINS lost a very dear shipmate on September 23, 2006. IT2(SW) Courtney Gordon will be remembered for his beaming smile, commitment to his job and shipmates, and his love of the game of golf. To honor his memory and say goodbye, the crew held a memorial for Courtney while at sea the week following his untimely death. At sunset on Friday, September 29th, HIGGINS loitered quietly over the Coronado Canyon off the California coast and said goodbye to her beloved shipmate. Following eulogies from his co-workers and the Captain, a wreath was laid into the water. Just as the sun touched the horizon HIGGINS rendered Courtney a 21-Gun salute followed by Taps. Courtney will be missed by all who knew him for the way he lived his life and will remain an inspiring example for us all



Courtney during our swim call



Courtney with his father during the
2005 Tiger Cruise

Fleet Week



The cities of San Francisco and San Diego held concurrent fleet weeks this year and HIGGINS was privileged to participate in both. The culmination of the San Diego Fleet week was the Sea and Air Parade on Saturday, September 30th. As HIGGINS rolled by strong and proud, Explosive Ordnance Technicians fast roped onto the flight deck from an SH-60B. For the entrance into San Francisco Bay, the ships were warmly welcomed by locals with cheers and horns from the Golden Gate bridge. The Blue Angels were on hand demonstrating amazing air power and skill with wings dirty fly bys. San Francisco rolled out the red carpet for the over 9,000 sailors and Marines who visited that week.

Chief Petty Officer pinning

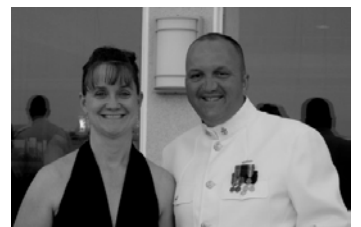
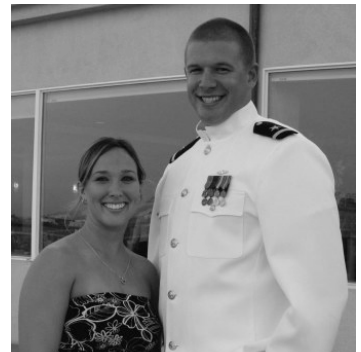
September 1st brought about the most anticipated time of year for the HIGGINS' Goat locker and a few select First Class Petty Officers... The Season of Pride! Two exceptional HIGGINS' crew members were selected to put on the Khaki at this year's board. CTAC(SW) Gregory Warner and DCC(SW) Richard Lopez began their transition, which culminated with their pinning as Chief Petty Officer's on Friday September 15th. Beaming with pride and flanked by family members, the Mess, and fellow HIGGINS Crew, DCC Lopez and CTAC Warner received their anchors. Congratulations to both on this benchmark naval achievement!



Dining Out



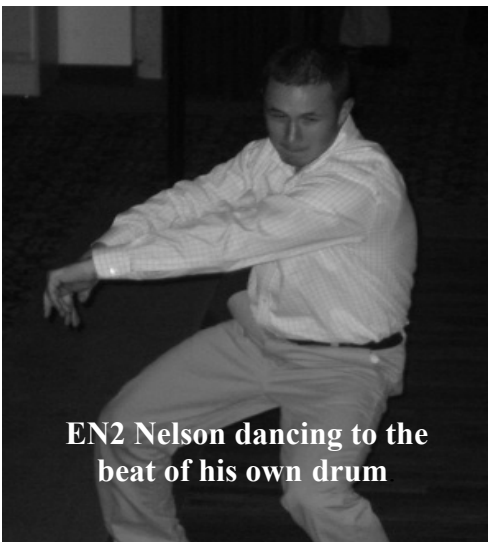
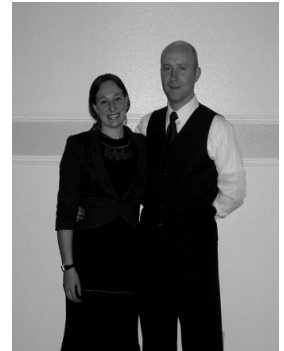
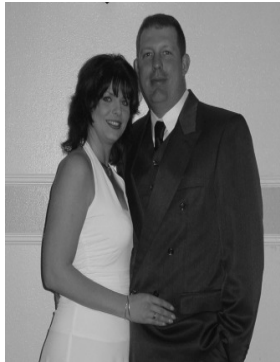
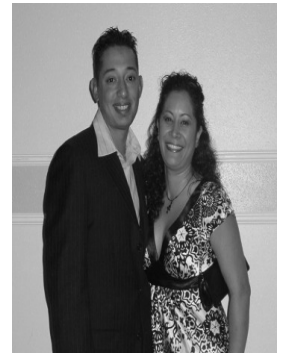
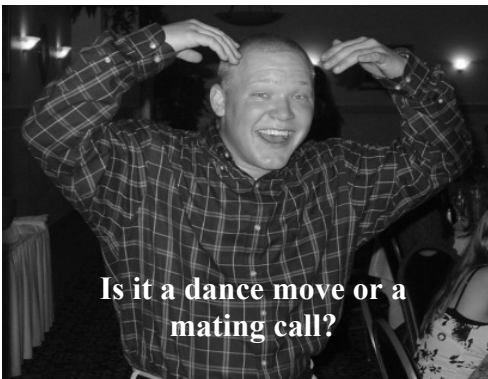
On July 20th the Wardroom and Chief's Mess joined together in their dress whites for an evening of fine dining and naval tradition. The Dining Out was held at the Admiral Kidd Club, overlooking San Diego Bay. For most attendees, this was their first Dining Out and they quickly learned that failure to adhere to the strict rules of the mess had interesting consequences! Highlights of the evening included ENS Nauss' demonstration of her "beat box" ability and ENS Inman's rendition of "The Goat is Old and Gnarly". Following dinner and a speech by RADM Lenndert Hering, Commander Navy Region Southwest, the night was capped off with cigars and jokes on the outside patio.



Holiday Par-tay!



HIGGINS ushered in the holiday season with style at the annual holiday party held on November 17, 2006 at the Anchors and Spurs Club. Decked out in their holiday best HIGGINS crew members and their dates enjoyed a three course meal that included salmon, chicken and a red velvet cake that was simply out of this world. Following dinner, the door prizes rolled out in between songs. As everyone shook a leg on the dance floor a few lucky folks won some big prizes. YN1 Romes won an all inclusive night's stay at a five star hotel downtown. The holiday party was fun for all who attended and a great opportunity to relax.



Our Grand Prize winner with her new laptop!

Ombudsman

HIGGINS said goodbye to Nadett Santos as our OMBUDSMAN and hello to a Sandi Fury this past fall. Nadett Santos, the wife of former Deck Department LCPO BMCS(SW) Pedro Santos turned over the duties to Mrs. Sandi Fury, the wife of HT1(SW) Christopher Fury. The HIGGINS family was grateful for the service Nadett provided during her tenure as Command OMBUDSMAN and wish her all the best. We are looking forward to working with Sandi in the future and during the upcoming deployment.



Mural Unveiling

After having our ship completely overhauled during the yard period it was a pleasant surprise to have a new mural of the ship unveiled on the Messdecks. Many thanks to Amanda Fields for her lovely artwork.



A Captain's Farewell

To all the friends, family, and especially the magnificent crew of the USS HIGGINS, I bid you all a fond farewell. It has been a fast paced and extremely gratifying last two years. I would be lying if I said "I didn't know where the last two years went". I know where they went, and it was the committed day to day task of carrying out the nation's business that encapsulated those two years, and so professionally performed by the men and women of HIGGINS. I was humbled and blessed to have had the opportunity to serve with such a talented group of individuals. As I said in my change of command speech, I couldn't find the word(s) to describe how well the crew had performed, so I had to make up a word..."they were simply HIGGANTASTIC!". All the best, and continue to excel under the very capable leadership of CDR Jeff Menne. I look forward to serving with you all in the very near future....CDR Jesse Wilson

Captain's Corner

Happy Holidays!! My wife Catherine and our family wish you all the best for this holiday season and a great New Year! As you enjoy the holidays with your friends and families, please be sure to be safe while traveling - leave yourself plenty of time to get to your destination.

I am very proud and honored to have taken the reigns from Commander Wilson as the HIGGINS Commanding Officer. He turned over a great ship with a great crew. November and December have been a very busy two months. The crew and ship have completed the basic training cycle and have increased speed as we shifted into our advanced phase of training with the NIMITZ Carrier Strike Group. The next few months will continue to be high paced as we finalize our maintenance and operational requirements leading up to our deployment. All the best!.....**CDR Jeff Menne**

Fall 2006 Promotions

Congratulations to all the sailors who advanced this Fall! Including the Captain's Command Advancement Program selectee, OS1 Thompson.

DC1 WEAVER
FC2 PELLMAN
FC2 SHAFFER
FC2 TAMILLO
DC3 MOORE
IT1 NUGENT
OS2 ANNIS
OS2 DURDOCK
EN2 FAGELA
GSE2 GONZALEZ-MONTOYA
OS2 HILL
IT2 JONES
OS2 KIM
CTT2 LOVE
CTT2 MANELSKI
FC2 NORICE
QM2 PARTIDA
ET2 POWELL
GSE2 VAZQUEZ
STG2 WILLIAMS
CTR3 DALE
FC3 EVENS
CTT3 HERMANSON
DC3 PADILLA-CORTES
DC3 RAMOS
GSM3 WILLIAMS
DC3 WILLIS

Best of the Best

Each Quarter the HIGGINS selects sailors who stand out among their peers, recognizing them as Senior Sailor of the Quarter (E-6), Junior Sailor of the Quarter (E-4-E-5) and Blue Jacket of the Quarter (E-3 and below). At the end of the year one sailor in each category will be chosen as the Sailor of the Year. These sailors also represent HIGGINS for the Nimitz Strike Group. This Quarter, CTM1 Meyers was selected as Nimitz Strike Group's Senior Sailor of the Quarter. Bravo Zulu shipmates!

Senior Sailor of the Quarter

1 st Quarter	FC1 Wiseman
2 nd Quarter	CTN1 Christensen
3 rd Quarter	CTM1 Myers

Junior Sailor of the Quarter

1 st Quarter	HM2 Turiano
2 nd Quarter	OS2 Hill
3 rd Quarter	DC1 Weaver

Blue Jacket of the Quarter

1 st Quarter	DC3 Moore
3 rd Quarter	DC3 Willis



QM2 Nas determined to enjoy Swim Call!



Chief Sadueste offers up some corn on the cob for Thanksgiving.



DC3 Moore flexing her stuff on Sports Day.



CO and XO spend Thanksgiving with the crew.